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# LIGHTING UP THE EXILE WITH THE OIL OF TORAH

The main thing is to add in studying and disseminating (the teachings of the Torah in general, the quality Yaakov embodies, but more particularly) the inner dimension of the Torah, the oil (the secrets of the secrets) of the Torah. And this dissemination should be in a manner that shines “upon one’s doorway from the outside” – as Moshiach told the Baal Shem Tov, “spread your wellsprings outward” – “until the Tarmodians have ceased traipsing about (the marketplace).”

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Translated by Boruch Merkur

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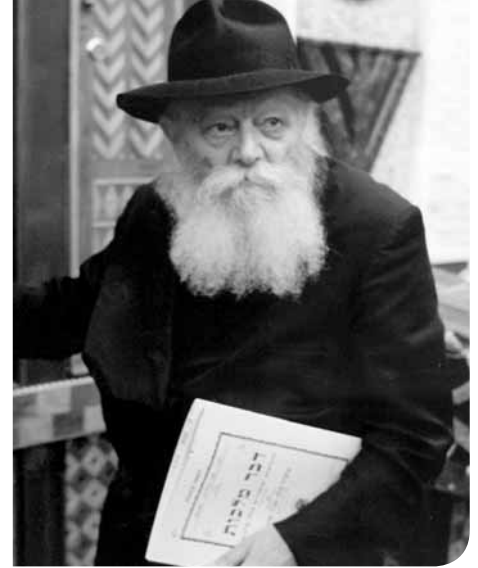
## FROM EXILE TO REDEMPTION IN THIS GENERATION

Our generation is the final generation of exile and the first generation of redemption. This unique period, transitioning from exile to redemption, is alluded to in this week’s Torah portion, Parshas Mikeitz, which is described as both “*keitz ha’yamim*,” the end of the days of exile [“all instances of “*keitz*” denote “end” –Rashi on Mikeitz, beg.], as well as “*keitz ha’yamin*,” the beginning of the redemption [“*mikeitz*” can mean “beginning” –Even Ezra on Shlach 13:25].

This connection with the redemption also finds expression in the holiday of Chanuka. Chanuka was founded upon the miracle of the oil, and oil is cited in the verse, “I have found

Dovid, My servant; with My sanctified oil I have anointed him” [see *ibid*, pg. 201: Indeed, the Messiah is called “Moshiach” in reference to “*ha’m’schicha b’shemen* – the anointment with oil” [...] and from him there shall be the primary and complete revelation of the oil of Torah (the secrets of the secrets of Torah), for he shall teach “the secret of its reasons [underlying the Mitzvos] and its hidden mysteries” (Rashi on Shir HaShirim 1:2)].

And the concept of redemption is especially preeminent on Shabbos Chanuka, for Shabbos is connected with redemption [as underscored in the Song of the Day, “*Mizmor shir l’yom ha’Shabbos* – A Psalm, a song for the day of Shabbos” – “A Psalm, a song for the Future Era, for a day that is entirely Shabbos



(rest) and tranquility for all eternity” (Tamid, end)].

## AN INCREASE THAT IS TANGIBLE AND OVERT

The practical application of the above is that – in accordance with the lesson of the days of Chanuka, “thereafter they progressively increase” [referring to the custom to add a candle each night of Chanuka] – every day there should be an increase in activities that bring about the redemption in a way that is tangible and overt.

Thus, there should be a strengthening in the faith and desire and yearning for the coming of Moshiach, to the extent that one feels that all the while that Moshiach Tzidkeinu has still not arrived – tangibly and overtly – one’s days are incomplete, his life is truly lacking. Yaakov expresses this sentiment by saying that even the 130 years of his life were seen as but “few” [meaning lacking], for the redemption had not yet been realized in the world (as discussed above).

The main thing, however, is to add in studying and disseminating (the teachings of the Torah in general, the quality

Yaakov embodies, but more particularly) the inner dimension of the Torah, the oil (the secrets of the secrets) of the Torah. And this dissemination should be in a manner that shines “upon one’s doorway from the outside” – as Moshiach told the Baal Shem Tov, “spread your wellsprings outward” – “until the Tarmodians have ceased traipsing about [the marketplace, for these people lingered in the marketplace at dusk, in order to sell kindling].”

Simply speaking, this amounts to adding in the campaign to promote the Mitzvos of Chanuka in the literal sense, publicizing and

“All the while that Moshiach Tzidkeinu has still not arrived – tangibly and overtly – one’s days are incomplete, his life is truly lacking. Yaakov expresses this sentiment by saying that even the 130 years of his life were seen as but “few” [meaning lacking], for the redemption had not yet been realized in the world.

encouraging others to celebrate Chanuka and to fulfill the Mitzvos of Chanuka, including making celebratory gatherings – in accordance with the opinion of Rambam that the days of Chanuka are “days of joy and praise” [and are to be celebrated

with feasts] – as well as by increasing in the fulfillment of the custom of giving Chanuka gelt and the like.

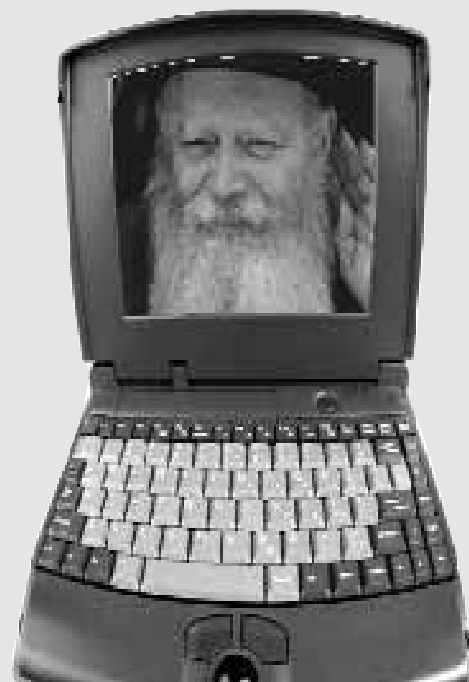
*(From the address of Shabbos Parshas Mikeitz, Shabbos Chanuka, the first day of Rosh Chodesh Teives 5752, muga.)*

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ב"ה

# LEADING THE BAAL T'SHUV REVOLUTION

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Nearly fifty years have passed since yeshivas Hadar HaTorah was founded in Crown Heights. It was the first yeshiva in the world for baalei t'shuva. \* The rosh yeshiva, Rabbi Yaakov Goldberg, who has been with the yeshiva for 43 years, tells about the yeshiva's early days and its special relationship with the Rebbe.

By Avrohom Rainitz

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## FIRST FRUITS

The hippie movement developed in the early 60's in the United States. These were young people, born after World War II, the first generation in the Western world who did not have to deal with day-to-day survival as their parents had. They felt a sense of emptiness and went searching for meaning. There was a high proportion of Jews amongst those who were seeking spiritual meaning in life.

A few years earlier, the Rebbe had begun sending shluchim to various cities and their spiritual messages were being well received. American youth,

especially those in colleges and universities, began taking an interest in Judaism. They started changing their perspectives and their way of life and wanted to learn more. The shluchim were very busy and couldn't provide what the youth wanted and so they sent them to 770.

Rabbi Avrohom Lipsker, who was learning in 770 at the time, began learning with these young men. At first it was outside the yeshiva's s'darim and with three or four men, but as time passed, a few more joined. They learned sichos of the Rebbe, Tanya, Shulchan Aruch, etc.

Rabbi Yisroel Jacobson who was part of the hanhala of the

yeshiva, loved what R' Lipsker was doing and decided to open a yeshiva program especially for these young men. After receiving the Rebbe's permission, he named the yeshiva, Hadar HaTorah. R' Jacobson brought in Rabbi Abba Paltiel to teach Nigleh. The learning spoke to the hearts and souls of the young men. The farbrengens every Thursday night attracted many young people who became progressively closer to Judaism.

The Rebbe was very fond of the talmidim of Hadar HaTorah. When R' Jacobson discussed the yeshiva with the Rebbe in yechidus, the Rebbe told him that he wanted these talmidim to be in



his Dalet amos (lit. four cubits, i.e. in his proximity). Indeed, in the early years, the yeshiva was in a building next to 770, a few meters away from the Rebbe's room. Some years later, when the number of talmidim grew and they had to move to larger quarters, the yeshiva moved to 824 Eastern Parkway, a one minute walk from 770. Gematria lovers figured out that 8-2-4 is the numerical transposition of the acronym "Chabad."

### THE FIRST YESHIVA IN THE WORLD FOR BAALEI T'SHUVA

Rabbi Yaakov Goldberg went to learn in 770 in 5725, three years after the founding of Hadar HaTorah. Since at that time Hadar HaTorah was next to 770, he often met the hippies who were attending the yeshiva. He even interacted with them every day in the Tomchei T'mimim dining room where, for a period of time, the bachurim ate along with the baalei t'shuva. Still, it never occurred to him that he would become a member of the

**“I took him shopping and bought him two suits, shirts, pants, etc. From that point on, I became like his father. He changed his behavior and began learning more seriously. He turned out to be very bright and within a short time he had reached such a high level of learning that he was able to transfer to a regular yeshiva and still be outstanding. He eventually went on to receive smicha for rabbanus and dayanus.**

staff of this new yeshiva.

His father, Rabbi Yosef Goldberg, was rosh yeshiva in Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim in Brunoy and it seemed probable that his son would join the staff of one of the Tomchei T'mimim yeshivos somewhere in the world. However, divine providence wanted otherwise, as R' Goldberg relates:

“It was during Aseres Yemei T'shuva 5729/1968, a year after I got married. I was about to finish my year in Kollel and I had several job offers. One of the offers was from R' Yisroel Jacobson who asked me to give a shiur for baalei t'shuva in Hadar HaTorah. I wrote all the offers to

the Rebbe and as the Rebbe did in those days, he cut the paper I submitted to him so that only R' Jacobson's offer remained and he wrote, “If his salary will be ensured.”

I showed the Rebbe's answer to R' Jacobson and after he guaranteed to pay my salary on time, I began working at Hadar HaTorah. I gave a shiur from 10:00-11:30. Since the learning in Kollel began at 11, I received permission from R' Chadakov to miss half an hour of learning at the Kollel.

**As someone for whom Yiddish is their mother tongue, how did you give shiurim in English to American kids?**

## ALMOST WENT ON SHLICHUS TO AUSTRALIA

Rabbi Goldberg relates:

In 5727, the Rebbe sent a group of bachurim to yeshiva in Australia. Their shlichus lasted two years and towards the end, the Rebbe told R' Chaim Gutnick that the new group would be bigger. There would be nine bachurim and they would also take along someone to serve as rosh yeshiva. They suggested that I be the rosh yeshiva and the Rebbe said it was a good idea, but since I was married and had a child, I had to have an apartment prepared in Australia.

The Rebbe told the askanim in Australia to think about it and if they agreed, they should call in the middle of the Purim farbrengen to say l'chaim on the live broadcast hook-up from New York and that would make the farbrengen even more joyous. They agreed, and at the farbrengen of Purim 5729 I heard that they called and said l'chaim with us in New York. I was at the farbrengen but I didn't know what lay behind the trans-Atlantic saying of l'chaim. This was because nobody had told me what was going on.

Before Pesach, when the members of the first group returned from Australia, my friend R' Avremel Altein, a member of the group, asked me, "Why didn't you travel to Australia?"

I looked at him in surprise, having no idea what he was talking about. He told me what he knew and I didn't know what to do. I decided that when I would have yechidus, I would ask the Rebbe.

I had yechidus with my wife and I told the Rebbe that I heard that he wanted to send me to Australia, that nobody had informed me, and maybe the Rebbe was waiting for a response from me. If the Rebbe wanted me to go and thought I was suitable for this position, my wife and I agreed wholeheartedly to go wherever the Rebbe sent us.

The Rebbe said, "Regarding your uncertainty as to whether you are suited for the position, according to what I heard, you are suited. Rabbi Groner is in Eretz Yisroel now [for the wedding of his daughter to Rabbi Tzvi Telzner]. Write him a letter and ask him if he agrees. However, as long as you are in Hadar HaTorah, don't leave."

I wrote to R' Groner about what had occurred and what the Rebbe told me. Within a short time I received an official invitation from the askanim in Australia to come and serve as rosh yeshiva. However, since I continued working at Hadar HaTorah, I told them that in accordance with what the Rebbe told me, I could not leave my job at Hadar HaTorah. Three years went by until they gave up and took Rabbi Binyomin Cohen as rosh yeshiva.

Thirteen years ago we had closure to this episode when my son married R' Cohen's daughter. That was when I went to Australia for the first time, for the wedding. My son remained there on shlichus.

I asked the same question of R' Jacobson. He smiled and said that most of the talmidim came from homes where the parents spoke Yiddish and I would manage. Actually, when I started teaching, I discovered that only two students knew a broken

American Yiddish. The rest knew not a word of Yiddish. My English wasn't on a high enough level to give a shiur. Although I had been in the United States for several years, I was immersed in the world of yeshiva and then in Kollel, and so my English was

comparable to the Yiddish of my two American students. I had to break my teeth with the little English I knew, and Hashem helped that within a short time I had learned the language and it was no longer a problem.

A few months later I finished Kollel and began looking for work. R' Jacobson told me the talmidim really enjoyed my shiurim and he asked whether I would work there full-time. Since R' Jacobson occasionally had yechidus with the Rebbe, together with the members of the hanhala of Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim, I asked him to ask the Rebbe about this.

The Rebbe's answer was I should take the job but under the condition he had mentioned earlier, i.e. my salary should be secure.

I began giving classes throughout the day and after a few months, R' Jacobson wanted to appoint me as Menahel Ruchni of the yeshiva. Until then, various classes were given to the students without any set structure. R' Jacobson wanted me to turn the place into more of a yeshiva.

**Since Hadar HaTorah was the first yeshiva of its kind, you had no model to copy. What guidelines did you use?**

The t'shuva movement was just getting off the ground and there had been no such thing as a yeshiva for baalei t'shuva. In Far Rockaway there was a yeshiva (not Chabad) that also accepted baalei t'shuva but there was no yeshiva that was entirely devoted to baalei t'shuva.

The Rebbe wanted the yeshiva to be run like a Tomchei T'mimim, though obviously tailored to baalei t'shuva. The truth is, when R' Jacobson told me that he wanted it to be like

an actual yeshiva, I had no other image of a yeshiva aside from what I saw in Tomchei T'mimim.

Most of the young men who came to us had some Jewish background which they got from the shluchim. They even kept Torah and mitzvos. They came to us in order to learn in a more serious way. There were also those who came with no prior knowledge and therefore, I set the yeshiva up in levels. In the beginners' class they learned Alef-Beis, Chumash, Kitzur Shulchan Aruch and other basics. In higher classes they learned Gemara with Rashi and Tos'fos, the Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch, and maamarim. R' Sholom Ber Vishedsky a"h taught the beginners' class; R' Abba Pliskin a"h taught the intermediate level, and I gave shiurim to the advanced level.

## MODEST BEGINNING

When I began working at Hadar HaTorah, the yeshiva had already moved to 824 Eastern Parkway. It was in an apartment building which had been partially turned into a yeshiva. In the early months, when there were few students, it was fine. After we gave the place the form of a yeshiva, more talmidim came and the place was no longer suitable.

In the early period even the eating and sleeping arrangements were not satisfactory. There was no dormitory and the students slept in the basement. They bought food in local stores with coupons that the yeshiva paid for. In my efforts to transform it into a yeshiva, I also dealt with the gashmius aspect of things. I spoke with R' Michoel Lipsker who ran the yeshiva kitchen and arranged for our talmidim to eat in the yeshiva's dining room for a monthly fee.



The yeshiva building back then

At this time, R' Jacobson gave over the running of the yeshiva to Rabbi J. J. Hecht, director of Jewish Released Time, also known as Shaloh (an abbreviation for Shiurei Limud Ha'das (Classes for Religious Instruction)), which provided Jewish instruction to Jewish children learning in public schools. Shortly after I had started working at Hadar HaTorah, the hanhala of Shaloh decided to buy a new building in honor of 18 years of R' Hecht's public service. They bought number 825 on the other side of Eastern Parkway. Unlike other buildings in the area, this was not an apartment house, but a meeting hall with a large hall on the first floor and other spacious rooms. R' Hecht decided this was just the right place for the yeshiva.

After the classrooms and beis midrash moved there, we were able to renovate 824 and turn it into a dormitory. In later years,



Rabbi Goldberg giving a shiur



Talmidim of the yeshiva

we built a kitchen and dining room in the basement of 824 and were no longer dependent on other mosdos. Following our renovations, there was increased enrollment. There were years when we had 60-70 baalei t'shuva.

### EVERY STUDENT IS A FASCINATING STORY

**As the rosh yeshiva, who is mainly responsible for the learning, how involved were you in the personal upheavals in the lives of the students as a result of the changes they were making in their lives?**

Aside from my position as rosh yeshiva, I also serve as Menahel Ruchni and for many years I was also the Meishiv in the afternoon. The talmidim came to talk to me and I was certainly privy to the doubts and struggles they were going through. Each talmid is a story; how he became acquainted with Chabad, how his views and ideas changed, and how he came to Hadar HaTorah.

A very young man, aged 17, came to us. We usually did not accept someone so young but the shliach who sent him begged us to take him and so we did. Within a short time it became clear

that he had no great desire to learn and he bothered the other students who wanted to learn. It reached a point where his Maggid Shiur came to me and said he could not go on teaching.

As the Menahel Ruchni I felt responsible for him and had him transferred to my class. Although I taught the highest class, I wanted him with me so I could see what was bothering him. A few days later I thought I had figured it out. He came from a very poor home and his clothing reflected that. I took him shopping and bought him two suits, shirts, pants, etc.

From that point on, I became like his father. He changed his behavior and began learning more seriously. He turned out to be very bright and within a short time he had reached such a high level of learning that he was able to transfer to a regular yeshiva and still be outstanding. He studied for smicha for rabbanus and dayanus. After he married he became a very successful teacher, mainly with teenagers. He was quite familiar with all the problems of people that age.

We had a fellow from California who came to us under unusual circumstances. While in California, he heard about

a doctor who wanted to drive to New York who was looking for someone to be his driver. This fellow liked adventures and thought this was a great idea. He contacted the doctor and within a short time they had set out for New York. Upon their arrival, the doctor had business to attend to in Manhattan and the young man took a walk in Brooklyn.

As he passed Eastern Parkway, he felt moved to enter a synagogue. He asked passersby where he could find the nearest shul and they directed him to a Conservative shul. This was the Jewish Center that later became Oholei Torah's main building. He came from an irreligious family that had a positive regard for Judaism and since he was a sensitive young man, he began praying with great emotion.

There was an interesting man in the shul at the time by the name of Chaim Ber Salem. He was an older man and affiliated with Conservative, but he loved Chabad. He would attend the Rebbe's farbrengens and when the Rebbe encouraged the singing, he would dance enthusiastically. I remember that after the Rebbe announced the T'fillin Campaign, he would come to yeshiva and ask the bachurim to go with him on Mivtza T'fillin.

When Chaim Ber Salem saw the fellow from California standing and davening with such emotion, he went over to him and said, "You don't belong here. Cross the street to 770 Eastern Parkway. That's where you belong."

He crossed the street and walked to 770. Bachurim there gave him a warm welcome and after talking to him at length and making sure he had a good supper, they invited him to sleep

in their room. After hearing his story and seeing that he was interested, they recommended that he learn in Hadar HaTorah.

Although he was young, 17-18, we saw he was serious and we accepted him. Somehow he worked things out with the doctor from California and remained to learn in New York. He was a bachur with a heart of gold, great emotional sensitivity, and his davening was extraordinary.

The story about the boy from California reminds me of another boy, also from California. He began his journey with Shlomo Carlebach in S. Francisco. At a certain point, Carlebach recommended that he go to the yeshiva for baalei t'shuva in New York. Back then, there were two yeshivos for baalei t'shuva, Hadar HaTorah in Crown Heights and Shor Yashuv (not Lubavitch) in Far Rockaway.

At first he came to us, but two weeks later he decided to try his luck at the other yeshiva. He spent two weeks there and came back to us. He did this several times, two weeks here and two weeks there.

This going back and forth wasn't good for him. I invited him in for a talk and said he had to decide where he wanted to learn as he couldn't keep bouncing back and forth. He asked for a few days in which to decide. A few days later he came to me and said he had decided to stay with us. I asked him how he arrived at this decision and he said that the learning was good in both places. As for the davening that he saw by us – there was nothing like it. He was particularly impressed by the prayers of the young boy I told you about earlier.

After making his final decision to remain with us, he made good



Talmidim in the yeshiva



Right: Rabbi Yisroel Jacobson; Left: Rabbi J. J. Hecht

progress in his learning and was one of our best talmidim. After completing his learning with us, he spent some time in the yeshiva in Brunoy. When my father came to the Rebbe for Tishrei, he told me that he and R' Nissan Nemanov were very impressed by this bachur, especially by his diligence in learning. "All your work in Hadar HaTorah is worth it for a bachur like this," my father exclaimed.

I remember another incident, about a Jew from Detroit who got involved in Judaism through the efforts of R' Yitzchok Meir Kagan

a"n. His story is both tragic and awe-inspiring. He began learning about Judaism in Detroit and after a while he wanted to include his wife. She was very interested in learning about Judaism and at a certain point she revealed that she was not Jewish but wanted to convert. It turned out that he was a Kohen and after she converted he could not marry her since a Kohen cannot marry a convert. They had a son which makes the story more complicated.

They asked for time to discuss it and after a few days they told R' Kagan that they had decided

**“When Chaim Ber Salem saw the fellow from California standing and davening with such emotion, he went over to him and said, “You don’t belong here. Cross the street to 770 Eastern Parkway. That’s where you belong.”**

they had to live according to the dictates of Torah. Since, according to Torah, they could not live as husband and wife, they would part. After they parted, he came to Hadar HaTorah and she went to Beis Chana in Minnesota. In the end, they both established fine, religious families.

### **THE REBBE’S INVOLVEMENT**

**Do you remember times that the Rebbe was involved in the t’shuva process of the bachurim?**

Our physical proximity to 770 engendered a spiritual proximity as well. For many years, the Rebbe would come to the yeshiva dining room Pesach night and bless the talmidim. R’ Hecht asked the Rebbe to go upstairs to the beis midrash too and he examined the entire floor. Since we knew the Rebbe would come and visit, I made sure that the library was in order and all the s’farim looked almost new. The Rebbe looked at the s’farim and then said to me, “The s’farim are meant to be learned from, to be used, even a little torn.”

Another year, we held the Seder in the beis midrash upstairs and on the way there, the Rebbe passed the yeshiva’s shul. The Rebbe looked at the Aron Kodesh and when he saw some Hoshanos left there from Sukkos, he said to me, “It’s a Jewish custom to use the Hoshanos to burn the chametz.”

Then the Rebbe went to the beis midrash where he noted that there were no candles and he asked that candles be brought to the table. I sent one of the bachurim to the neighbors in the next building for candles and fire.

The Rebbe waited and I said that a bachur had gone to get candles. The Rebbe said, “You also need to bring fire!”

It was windy outside and it was very difficult to carry a lit fire in the street. I pointed to the wall that separated our building from the neighbors and said the bachur had gone there. The Rebbe smilingly asked, “Will you be making a hole in the wall so he can go through?”

For the Rebbe, every word is holy, even those things which seem like light remarks. A short while later, someone passed by with a bench and accidentally banged the bench into the wall, making a hole.

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During the years that the Rebbe received people for yechidus, bachurim from Hadar HaTorah went to the Rebbe and presented their problems. The Rebbe once said to R’ Jacobson, “The bachurim who learn by you come to me for yechidus. I see them as they were and how they are now and see the difference, from one extreme to another!”

In the early years, a young man came to us who was very refined and very spiritual. Before coming to us he had been involved with a Christian cult. He

was so heavily involved with them that he gave them everything he had. The shliach, R’ Yitzchok Meir Kagan managed to get him away from them and sent him to Hadar HaTorah.

A few weeks after he arrived, he began feeling drawn to that Christian cult again. We advised him to see the Rebbe and to ask for a bracha. The Rebbe told him to make a firm resolution that for the next six months he would immerse himself in the study of Torah and the performance of mitzvos and would not think about them at all. Then, said the Rebbe, the feeling would pass.

He did as the Rebbe told him and today he is regarded as a distinguished Chassid.

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We once had a 25 year old with long hair come to us with his dog. He met R’ Jacobson and said he wanted to learn. R’ Jacobson wanted to see what he knew, but the man said that other than the fact that he was Jewish and had a Jewish name, he knew nothing about Judaism. When R’ Jacobson asked him whether he knew Alef-Beis, he looked questioningly and asked, “Rabbi, what is Alef-Beis?”

R’ Jacobson didn’t know whether we could accept someone without any Jewish knowledge and left it up to me to decide. I said I would accept him but not the dog.

He studied and progressed. When he learned that t’shuva only atones for transgressing prohibitions but cannot make up for positive commands that he did not fulfill over the years, he was very upset. He was especially sad about not having put on t’fillin for 12 years, from his bar mitzva till age 25.

When he expressed his pain to the Rebbe in yechidus, the Rebbe



From left to right: R' Yaakov Osdoba, R' Yosef Boruch Wirchberg, R' Yaakov Goldberg

told him that when he would be mekarev other Jews and influence them to put on t'fillin, he would have a share in their mitzva of t'fillin. This would be a tikkun for all those years when he had not put on t'fillin.

We once had a young man whose parents were very opposed to his doing t'shuvah. When he began his spiritual journey he cut off ties with his former classmates and in general, minimized his involvement with matters of this world. His parents, who didn't know he was involved in Judaism, thought he was having a nervous breakdown and took him to a psychologist.

Even after they found out that he was becoming a baal t'shuvah, they did not relax but were sure something was wrong with him.

His father was a famous lawyer and when he heard that his son had decided he would learn in our yeshiva, he sent us a letter asking us to expel his son. He said that if we did so,

he would donate \$2,000 to the yeshiva (a large sum in those days).

The Menahel Gashmi, R' J. J. Hecht, wrote him back, "Even if you give us double that amount, we reject your request since it is our job to be mekarev young Jews to yeshiva and not to distance them."

Since the young man had not had a proper bris mila, he had to undergo hatafas dam bris (covenantal blood letting) at which time he wanted to choose a Jewish name. He asked the Rebbe which name to pick. It was Chanuka time and the Rebbe mentioned a certain name that has a connection to Yehuda Maccabi and the Chashmonaim.

### THE REBBE: THE MOSAD IS ESSENTIAL AND VITAL

**Did you receive instructions or kiruvim from the Rebbe in the course of your work at Hadar HaTorah?**

One time, at a yechidus with my family, after giving me a bracha the Rebbe added, "And your children, these refer to your students; may you also have success with your students, and those under your guidance and influence."

On another occasion, I wrote a personal question to the Rebbe that had nothing to do with the yeshiva. The Rebbe responded and added: **What's happening with Hadar HaTorah?** From then on, I was more careful about writing reports about the goings-on at yeshiva.

At a certain point, I worked half a day at Hadar HaTorah and half a day in Oholei Torah. A year later, I stopped working at Oholei Torah and thought of working only half a day and learning the other half. A friend of mine, R' Zalman Labkowski was learning in Kollel and I really wanted to learn with him half a day. I asked the Rebbe in yechidus and said I could manage financially and I



His story is both tragic and awe-inspiring. He began learning about Judaism in Detroit and after a while he wanted to include his wife... It turned out that he was a Kohen and after she converted he would not be allowed to marry her since a Kohen cannot marry a convert. They asked for time to discuss it... After they parted, he came to Hadar HaTorah and she went to Beis Chana in Minnesota. In the end, they both established fine, religious families.

desired to learn Torah.

The Rebbe answered, "Why should you start learning now? You need to work! Take a position in Hadar HaTorah or Oholei Torah but it needs to be all day!"

When I told the Rebbe it was hard for me to work all day, the Rebbe quoted the verse, "Man was born to work."

R' Jacobson passed away in the summer of 5735/1975 and the yeshiva experienced a financial crisis. I did not receive my salary for six months and was in dire straits. In the winter of 5736 I wrote to the Rebbe and detailed all the factors that contributed to the poor financial situation after the passing of R' Jacobson, and I asked whether I should look for another job.

The Rebbe replied on the other side of my letter:

**Since the mosad is essential and vital, surely in the end they will overcome all difficulties and be successful in all that was mentioned on the other side of the page. However there is the statement of Chazal, if you toil, you find. Especially when the merit of many helps you and it says counsel is found with many advisors. I will mention it again at the gravesite.**

A short while later, R' J. J.

Hecht took over the financial responsibility for the yeshiva and the yeshiva slowly climbed out of the hole it was in.

I learned of the nachas the Rebbe felt, due to the fact that I had remained at the yeshiva despite the financial crisis, when he gave out matzos that year. From the year 5725 and on, I went for the matza distribution every year and received a piece for me and a piece for my father. I would send the matza to my father by express mail and he would get it on Pesach.

Erev Pesach 5736, a few months after I received the Rebbe's answer to stay at the yeshiva, the Rebbe gave me two small pieces of matza. As always, I asked the Rebbe for a piece of matza for my father. The Rebbe looked at me and then gave me a whole matza and said, "Send what I gave you earlier to your father and this is for you."

The following year, 5737, which was the last year that the Rebbe gave out matza to all of Anash and the T'mimim, the Rebbe gave me a whole matza. This was very unusual and only a few elder Chassidim and members of the secretariat received a whole matza. To me it was clear that the Rebbe was conveying to me how pleased he

was that I had remained at the yeshiva despite the hardship.

## UPS AND DOWNS

At the beginning of the 80's, several yeshivos for baalei t'shuva opened within and outside of Chabad and the number of talmidim at Hadar HaTorah dwindled. Baalei t'shuva preferred learning in yeshivos out-of-town and a yeshiva in the heart of Brooklyn was not as attractive. Within a few years the yeshiva nearly closed.

Rabbi Goldberg:

As the Menahel Ruchni, I felt responsible for the future of the yeshiva and I looked for creative ways to increase enrollment. I began giving a Chassidus class every morning that was also open to men in Crown Heights. The shiur took off and many people attended it before going to work. However, the rest of the day continued to be very weak.

We opened a Sunday program. In the United States, Sunday is a day off and many Lubavitchers don't work. I invited them to come and learn in the yeshiva. Many people were interested and came to learn for a few hours in the morning and a few hours in the evening.

After several weak years, R' Yaakov Silberstein, a former student of ours, decided to devote himself to the yeshiva. R' Shea Hecht, who had been appointed to run the yeshiva in his father's lifetime, took on R' Yaakov as the administrator of the yeshiva. He had to build everything from scratch and has been very successful. He brought new students to the yeshiva and within a short time, the yeshiva came alive again.

The yeshiva continues to operate under the auspices of Shaloh which is run by R'

Sholom Ber, R' Shea, and R' Shimon Hecht.

During the summer, the yeshiva moves upstate to the Shaloh campus in the Catskill mountains. Many talmidim join the program just for the summer though some of them remain for the year. During the summer we also have YeshivaCation for a week which gives young people a taste of Judaism. A similar YeshivaCation takes place in the winter and spring.

After the passing of R' J. J. Hecht, the Rebbe said his name

should be added to the yeshiva so that it is called, "Kol Yaakov Yehuda – Hadar HaTorah."

25 years have passed since the renewal of the yeshiva and boruch Hashem, dozens of baalei t'shuva learn with us every year.

On the staff are Rabbi Yaakov Osdoba who is a Maggid Shiur and Meishiv in the afternoon and Rabbi Yosef Boruch Wirberg, an alumnus of the yeshiva who is a Maggid Shiur and mashpia for twenty years.

Boruch Hashem, we have had the privilege of establishing

hundreds of Chassidic homes. We stay in touch with the talmidim even after they leave and get married and we occasionally invite them for Melaveh Malkas.

The alumni who live in Crown Heights come to daven at the yeshiva on Shabbos and Yom Tov. We have special shiurim for them between Mincha and Maariv and the third Shabbos meal which is arranged by Dovid Wohl.

Many graduates keep in touch with me and other staff members, despite the many years that have gone by since they left yeshiva.

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Upon this statement I affix my signature, Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> Tamuz 5766



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# 'PASKEN THAT THE YESHIVA SHOULD GET OUT OF DEBT'

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The sudden passing of Rabbi Menachem Mendel Mendelsohn a"h, rav of Moshav Komemiyus, shocked those close to him and his many admirers. R' Mendelsohn was a true friend of Chabad and the Rebbe gave him a special ko'ach to pasken against the heavenly court.

By Menachem Ziegelboim

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**R'** Menachem Mendel Mendelsohn was born in 5698 to his parents, R' Binyamin Mendelsohn, rav of Moshav Komemiyus and Mrs. Chaya Miriam Mendelsohn. His father was a gaon and a tremendously sensitive person.

After the passing of his father in 5739/1979, his son R' Menachem Mendel was appointed to serve as his successor. He took over his father's monumental project, Keren HaSheviis, which helps farmers in Eretz Yisroel who

commit to observing the laws of Shmita. G'dolei Yisroel of all sectors respected him for this holy endeavor and enthusiastically joined and supported him.

He was rav for 32 years in the course of which he was particular not to swerve an iota from the traditions of our fathers. This was done with his outstanding humility. While maintaining his principles, he deferred to every Jew and distanced himself from honor and power. Throughout the day you would see him sitting and learning and his love for Torah was well known.

## ADMIRER OF THE REBBE AND FRIEND OF CHABAD

R' Mendelsohn was a true friend of Chabad and a great admirer of the Rebbe. He regularly attended farbrengens and Chabad events in Kiryat Gat and other locations. He was a friend of Rabbi Moshe Havlin, rav of Kiryat Gat, and had a warm relationship with the Lubavitch yeshiva in that city. For many years he davened Shacharis every morning in the zal of the yeshiva g'dola. He visited the Rebbe many times.



Rabbi Mendelsohn asking for a bracha on behalf of the yeshiva in Kiryat Gat

On one of those visits, the Rebbe blessed him “there should be a Komemiyus (lit. uprightness – the Sages say that it indicates a double level of uprightness – Ed.) in all details and all matters.”

In 5742, when the Rebbe turned 80, he submitted divrei Torah from his father to the anthology Shaar HaDarom that rabbis in the south of Eretz Yisroel published in honor of the Rebbe’s 80<sup>th</sup> birthday. In his introduction he wrote, “With honor and delight I ... offer some chiddushei Torah in the writings of my father, the gaon and Chassid zt”l, Av Beis Din Komemiyus, who was always willing to attend and speak at farbrengens of Chabad Chassidim in the area. In honor of the Lubavitcher Rebbe on the occasion of his reaching 80 years, for length of days and good years.”

**“R’ Mendelsohn said, ‘The Rebbe loved Komemiyus.’ He said his father received dozens of letters from the Rebbe that have not yet been published, some of which cannot be publicized as of now.”**

R’ Mendelsohn went on to write, “Throughout my father’s life, he constantly instilled belief in the coming of Moshiach Tzidkeinu and in the g’dolim and great tzaddikim of the generations who worked to hasten his coming, and opposed the ideas of the secular movements that delay the Geula. Publicizing his words in honor of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, who spreads and instills a yearning for the coming of Moshiach, will certainly provide him with gratification for the elevation of his soul in Gan Eden.”

R’ Shabsi Weintraub, a

Lubavitcher Chassid who lives in Kiryat Malachi, related:

“Last Erev Yom Kippur morning I did Kaparos at Moshav Komemiyus. Afterwards, I went to see Rabbi Mendelsohn do Kaparos. As a friend of the family, I talked to him about my grandfather, Noach Gad Weintraub who was a dear friend of his father, R’ Binyamin Mendelsohn, and about Chabad and the Rebbe.

“R’ Mendelsohn said, ‘The Rebbe loved Komemiyus.’ He said his father received dozens of letters from the Rebbe that have not yet been published, some of



Rabbi Mendelsohn on a visit to 770

which cannot be publicized as of now.”

### FORM A BEIS DIN

An extraordinary thing happened with him and Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim in Kiryat Gat when the yeshiva was in dire financial straits in the beginning of the 90's. The yeshiva struggled for months to survive. Debts had piled up and the hanhala didn't know where to turn. Deficits of hundreds of thousands of dollars weighed on them with no solution in sight. The financial situation continued to deteriorate until the money the yeshiva was supposed to get was frozen and creditors applied for a court order to liquidate all assets. The yeshiva's buildings were almost seized in order to enable creditors to recoup some of what was owed to them.

That year, 5750, was declared by the Rebbe to be a Shnas Nissim-Year of Miracles. The following story took place that year which, till today, is regarded with astonishment:

One of the people

remembered by many of the talmidim of the yeshiva was the tall, impressive figure of R' Menachem Mendel Mendelsohn. He had reason to travel to the US and before he left, he told the yeshiva's hanhala that he intended on visiting the Rebbe for dollars. R' Havlin asked him to ask the Rebbe for a bracha to save the mosdos. R' Mendelsohn, who knew of the financial distress the yeshiva was in, agreed to do so.

During Elul, as he passed by the Rebbe for a dollar, R' Mendelsohn gave the Rebbe regards from the yeshiva and said the yeshiva was expanding in quantity and quality and therefore, he was asking for a bracha to save the mosdos. He said that many talmidim learned there and the financial situation was endangering the viability of the yeshiva. It looked as though the yeshiva would be forced to close.

The Rebbe responded, “I don't know whether you have a beis din in Komemiyus. If you do, fine; if not, take two

dayanim with you and form a beis din and pasken that they must get out of debt.”

The Rebbe said there is a source in the Rambam for this in the Laws of T'shuva, chapter 9, Halacha 1, where the Rambam paskens that a person needs silver and gold in order to be able to serve Hashem in peace and joy.

R' Mendelsohn returned to Eretz Yisroel before Rosh Hashanah. He formed a beis din with Rabbi Yitzchok Yehuda Yaroslavsky, rav of the Nachalas Har Chabad neighborhood, and Rabbi Mendel Wechter, head of the Kollel Avreichim in the neighborhood.

R' Moshe Havlin stood before them and presented his claim, that the yeshiva had to get out of debt in order to be able to continue to exist so the talmidim could sit and learn Torah. The rabbanim paskened the following p'sak din which was written and sealed with the seal of the beis din:

**We were sitting as one in an assemblage of three, when Rabbi Moshe Havlin, Rosh Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim in Kiryat Gat, came before us, [speaking] in his own name and as representative of the hanhala of Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim in Kiryat Gat and the Chabad mosdos there which are run by Rabbi Sholom Dov Wolpo. He told us the terrible financial situation the mosdos that he runs are in, and the pressure which makes it difficult to run the mosdos and yeshiva because of the debts and creditors.**

Since all this interferes and disturbs the spiritual running of the yeshiva and the mosdos, based on the instruction of the Lubavitcher Rebbe to establish a Beis Din and issue a ruling in this matter according to what



# A GREAT MIRACLE HAPPENED THERE

---

The Rebbe's shluchim, who are spread out all over the world working day and night to be mekarev Jews to Torah have much to tell about the miracles and salvation they see with their own eyes. Sometimes, it happens the other way around – first there is the salvation and then comes the t'shuva and mesirus nefesh. \* Presented in honor of Chanuka.

By Rabbi Shmuelewitz

Shliach, Beit Shaan

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**W**orking under the assumption that the Chassidic aphorisms in the HaYom Yom are not only stories from the past but lessons for our daily lives, let us look at the HaYom Yom for 29 Kislev. The HaYom Yom of 29 Kislev says that in the merit of the t'shuva and mesirus nefesh of the Jews in the times of the Greeks, great, miraculous Divine salvation – the miracle of Chanuka – came about.

Perhaps what the Rebbe is teaching us with this statement is that just as with the miracle of Chanuka, the same is true for us. In the merit of t'shuva and mesirus nefesh, Hashem provides us with a great, miraculous salvation.

The Rebbe's shluchim, who are spread out all over the world working day and night to be mekarev Jews to Torah, t'shuva and mesirus nefesh, have much to tell about the miracles and

salvation they see with their own eyes.

## SALVATION AT THE MEXICAN BORDER

At a Yud-Tes Kislev farbrengen arranged by the shliach, Rabbi Shimshon Tal of Hod HaSharon, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Groner of Kiryat Gat told the following story:

Rabbi Groner had participated in a farbrengen at Yishuv Naveh Ilan near Yerushalayim, and towards the end a young man came over and asked him for a ride to Rechovot. During the drive, the young man told him:

"The hat, suit, beard and peios, being religious and a Lubavitcher, are new for me. I finished my army service not long ago and went on a trip to the United States. I went to S. Diego because I have relatives there. To my dismay, they told me they were making renovations

on their house and could not host me. They told me not to worry because I could spend as much time as I liked at the Chabad house, which is a short drive from their house.

"The Chabad house is run like the tent of Avrohom Avinu, i.e. if you make blessings on the food and come to davening, you don't have to pay. So every morning they showed me how to put on t'fillin, and I spent several days at the Chabad house.

"I met an American guy who liked to tour, and he suggested that we go together to Tijuana. Tijuana is in Mexico, right across the border from S. Diego. We went for a couple of days, but when we returned to the border to reenter the US, I ran into trouble. My friend with his American passport had no problem crossing the border, but I was told that my visa was no longer valid. I was told I would have to go to Mexico City and



apply for a new visa.

“I tried explaining that it was Friday and I had to get to the Chabad house before Shabbos, but they told me that they weren’t interested and all that concerned them was my visa.

“I stood there and wondered what I should do. Then one of the border officials came over to me and said, ‘I heard what you said and realize you are a Sabbath observant Jew (unfortunately, that was not accurate at the time). I am also Jewish although I don’t observe the Sabbath. I’d like to help you even if it will cost me my job. Over there on the right there is another way to get over to the American side and there is less security. Go there and run across. Even if they shout at you to stop, continue running and I’ll tell the officials to let you go. The main thing is you should get to the Chabad house before Shabbos.’

“I didn’t have many options, so I did precisely what he told me to do. I ran across and within a minute I was on the American

side. From there I continued to S. Diego and returned to my room at the Chabad house. This led me to think about Shabbos. Although I had never kept Shabbos before, I decided that at least this once I had to observe Shabbos. After all, it was thanks to Shabbos that ‘Eliyahu HaNavi’ had gotten me across the border.

“I kept that Shabbos and the next one too and then some more. I attended all the t’fillos and shiurim at the Chabad house. They invited me to Shabbos meals and then helped me get accepted into a yeshiva, find a shidduch, and establish a Chassidic home.”

The equation is clear: T’shuva = a great, miraculous divine salvation.

## A DIVINE SALVATION AND AN ELECTRIC MENORAH

Rabbi Shlomo Schwartz, shliach in Chadera:

“A few years ago, we used an old makeshift electric menorah. One year, the municipality

approved the menorah and allowed us to connect it to the electric system. The following year though, they told us that the menorah didn’t meet the necessary safety standards and we would have to rewire it, which was impossible.

“It was the last day before Chanuka and I consulted with the shliach Rabbi Yehuda Butman. Rabbi Butman said, ‘This afternoon I will be putting up mezuzos with a member of the municipality, and Danny Cohen, the municipality’s electrician, will also be there. Go and meet with the electrician and see what he can do for you.’

“I went to the ceremony and met the electrician. I told him how important it was to use the menorah. I emitted a sigh and said, ‘Oy, if only we had a normal menorah instead of this one.’

“Danny asked, ‘Why don’t you order a new menorah?’

“I explained that it was because a new menorah cost 1800 shekels. He asked whether I could get a new menorah in

one day. I asked him to wait a minute, and I called Tzach and spoke with Rabbi Berele Levitin. Rabbi Levitin told me he had a menorah. I told Danny, and he asked me again how much it cost. When I said 1800 shekels, he took out his checkbook, wrote a check for that amount, and said, 'Go and get it.'

"Rabbi Butman immediately offered his car and I drove to Kfar Chabad. Before sunset, the Chadera junction on the coast road was illuminated by a new electric menorah, which was seen by tens of thousands of people who pass by every day."

### **LIGHT THE MENORAH AND MERIT SALVATION**

The story from Chadera has a sequel. An employee of the municipality decided to "adopt" all the Chabad house's electric menorahs. Every year, he calls Rabbi Schwartz and asks when they need to be made ready for Chanuka. He volunteers his time and expertise and doesn't leave until all the menorahs are hooked up and lit.

Every year, Rabbi Schwartz asks him, "How can I repay you for all your help? What bracha do you want us to ask for you?"

He modestly responds, "Nothing; just bracha and hatzlacha."

Two years ago, there was a change. When Rabbi Schwartz asked him what bracha he wanted, he thought a bit and then said, "You know what? Ask for a bracha for children. We have been waiting several years for another child."

Rabbi Schwartz wrote the request to the Rebbe and pretty much forgot about the whole thing. A year later, Erev Chanuka 5770, the fellow called Rabbi

Schwartz and was updated about the location of all the menorahs. The conversation was almost over when Rabbi Schwartz suddenly asked, "Nu, tell me something good."

The man said, "My wife gave birth a month ago."

Rabbi Schwartz exclaimed, "Why didn't you tell me right away?" thrilled at the fulfillment of the bracha.

### **MIRACULOUS SALVATION IN THE CHABAD HOUSE KITCHEN**

Sometimes, salvation is needed in things that seem trivial, but are very important to running a Chabad house. For example, at the Chabad house in Hod HaSharon, a problem was discovered in the kitchen's plumbing system. This kitchen is used to prepare hot meals for dozens of needy people. Every day volunteers come to help out. Some do the cooking, others pack the food, and the rest make deliveries. With the plumbing out of order, the program was on hold.

A plumber told them that it could not be fixed and had to be replaced. Rabbi Tal began looking into prices and contractors and concluded that rather than fix the problem it made more sense to set up a new kitchen somewhere else.

A good friend of Rabbi Tal helped him look for someone reliable who could build them a new kitchen. They visited several showrooms and were told that the process would take several weeks of measurements, ordering material, building, etc. and it would cost a pretty penny. The problem was that in the meantime, they needed to run a kitchen, and there was no

kitchen.

Someone remembered that there was yet another kitchen showroom that they hadn't visited. They went and couldn't believe their eyes. A completed kitchen was waiting just for them!

What happened was that a stainless steel kitchen had been made for a customer, but for some reason the deal fell through. The seller was ready to sell it at a ridiculously low price. Rabbi Tal and his assistant located a friend who was willing to drop everything and come install the new kitchen. Another friend covered the financial expenditures, and in one day the new kitchen was in operation, to the joy of the shliach, the volunteers, and the needy.

### **SPIRITUAL SALVATION**

Rabbi Yigal Kirshnzaft, who used to be the shliach in Neveh Dekalim in Gush Katif, relates:

"One of the furthest military outposts in the Gaza Strip was Motzav Zivanit. It was actually in Palestinian territory, and whenever we wanted to visit the soldiers there, we had to get past several fences and blockades. One day of Chanuka, we loaded our van with menorahs and doughnuts and headed out. We arrived at Motzav Zivanit and made our presence known with loud Chassidic music.

"We were told that one of the officers was lying in his tent, sick with high fever. I went to see him and begged him to say l'chaim over a cup of mashke and to come out and dance with the soldiers. He explained he couldn't get out of bed because of his fever. He told me that it was dangerous to be there since they constantly got shot at from Khan Yunis.

"After pleading with him some more, he finally agreed to get up and after sipping some mashke he went out to the dancing soldiers. After some time had passed, we shook hands and said goodbye to the soldiers. Then we drove off.

"Five or six years went by. My son Dovid was principal of a Chabad elementary school in Yerushalayim, and he was looking for another teacher to hire. He heard about a Chassidishe man by the name of Nir Tzukerman, who had a reputation of being an excellent teacher. He hired him, to the delight of the children and the parents.

"One day, Nir asked Dovid, 'Are you related to the Kirshnzaft from Neveh Dekalim?'

"That's my father,' said Dovid.

"Really? It's thanks to him that I'm a Lubavitcher!'

"Then the Chassidishe melamed told him how one day he was sick and the Lubavitchers showed up at his guard post. Rabbi Kirshnzaft had radiated joy and didn't leave until he had convinced him to say I'chaim and got him out of bed.

"After the Chabadnikim left, I began to think. Who are these Lubavitchers? What makes them tick? I began learning Chassidus until I became a Lubavitcher myself."



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# THE SELF-PROTECTING SIDDUR

By S. Keret

What an indescribable feeling, to be in the only place in the United States of America where you can actually feel the K'dusha around you. The month of Tishrei passed by like a whirlwind, filled with late night Farbrengens and trying to spend as much time in the presence of the King, the Rebbe shlita. This was thirty years ago, a time where there were no schedules set up and the responsibility of how to use your time and conduct yourself in the Rebbe's Sh'chuna was your own.

On one of my last days in Crown Heights before flying home I decided to buy myself a present – a small, leather T'hillas Hashem siddur on which I engraved my name on the outside and put a picture of the Rebbe shlita smiling on the inside. I brought it for my last davening in 770 before my flight.

Though I was headed to Eretz HaKodesh, I felt like I had left the source of K'dusha behind. As I was on the plane looking for my precious siddur I was horrified to discover it was not there. I was devastated because though I had bought a lot of other things during my stay, this was the only Tashmish K'dusha I could afford and it was very special to me. I asked anyone and everyone I knew who had been there if anyone had found it, but no

one had seen my siddur. Since I have a very unique first and last name (thanks, Mom and Dad!), I prayed that perhaps it would turn up.

But months passed, and it didn't turn up. Then, after Pesach, a friend met me and mentioned that she had seen my Siddur in 770 and had brought it back. I was thrilled, but this would be a really boring story if that were the end.

The next time I left it somewhere accidentally was at Kever Rachel. This was in the summertime, and I wasn't even sure I had left it there – I am ever so slightly forgetful. I had gone to various Kivrei Tzaddikim, so I couldn't be sure I had left it there specifically. Again I was upset, but because my precious Siddur had spent so much time in 770 I figured it had a special holiness to it. The first day of school a classmate came up to me and said, "You won't believe what I found at Kever Rochel!"

Though my precious Siddur was returned to me again, the special picture of the Rebbe smiling inside of it had been removed. I guess someone needed the Rebbe smiling at him more than I did; I was just thrilled to have my precious Siddur back.

A few months later in Adar I was suggested a Shidduch. In

those days in Israel, you either met in someone's house or in a public park of some sort in an area where you wouldn't be seen. We met across from the old train station in Tel-Aviv at a big park. My date brought a picnic and his T'fillin, and I brought a bag with a change of clothes for a chasuna I was headed to, as well as my purse and my trusted Rebbe siddur, as I had affectionately coined it. We sat and spoke with our backs to our stuff (again, this is thirty years ago in Israel) during which time someone came up and asked us if we wanted a banana and spent a few minutes arguing in good old Israeli fashion when we said no.

Five minutes later we turned around and our stuff was gone. My dates T'fillin (only four months old) had been stolen, and though my outfit was new, his was by far the greatest loss. I was horrified and felt awful for my date (who soon became my Chassan).

When I told my mother, she immediately smiled and said, "Your Rebbe's siddur was there, right? Well, then you know everything will be returned; though this time someone will have some explaining to do."

Three weeks later I received a postcard from the Tel-Aviv Police (my ID had been in my wallet). Everything had been brought in to their precinct by a man who wished to remain anonymous (duh). The only thing missing was 18 shekels from my wallet – pretty decent for a ganav – but, then again, he didn't stand a chance because my "Rebbe's Siddur" was there!

**“When I told my mother, she immediately smiled and said, “Your Rebbe’s siddur was there, right? Well, then you know everything will be returned; though this time someone will have some explaining to do.”**

# ARE YOU PREPARED?



By Rabbi Heschel Greenberg

Founder and Director of the Jewish Discovery Center of Buffalo, NY

## JOSEPH'S SHABBAT TABLE

Joseph is now the Viceroy of Egypt. His dream that one day his brothers will bow down to him has come true. Joseph is now in a position to torment them by accusing them of being spies and threatening that if they do not bring their/his brother Benjamin they will not be able to return and that Shimon, who had been detained by Joseph, would remain a prisoner.

When they finally do return with Benjamin, Joseph prepares a meal for them. In his instructions to the supervisor of his house he tells them to “slaughter an animal and to prepare.”

In this verse it does not really say what Joseph asked the supervisor to prepare. It is assumed that he meant that he should prepare a full meal, but the Torah does not explicitly state what he wanted his servant to prepare.

According to the Midrash the term “preparation” is a code word for the preparations that we make for the Shabbat. Since we cannot prepare our foods on the Shabbat itself we are compelled to make all of the preparations before the onset of the holy day.

The Midrash suggests that Joseph observed the Shabbat and therefore made sure that his supervisor would have everything prepared for the festive Shabbat meal that he would share with his brothers.

## THE DAY AND MEAL OF UNITY

One can derive from this interpretation an immediate lesson:

The meal that Joseph had with his brothers was a prelude to Joseph's final reconciliation with his brothers. First it was this meal where he sets them up for the ensuing accusation that Benjamin stole his magic goblet. This eventually led to Judah's bold defense for his brother at which point Joseph broke down and divulged his identity to them, a confession which led to all the brothers' reunification as a family.

Second, and more importantly, as the commentator Sforno and others maintain, this meal, in which he gave Benjamin five times the amount he gave the other brothers, was the final test to see if his brothers might still harbor any feelings of jealousy to one of them. When the brothers exhibited no jealousy for his preferential treatment of Benjamin Joseph knew that they had erased all of their negative feelings towards him as well. They were now, therefore, ready for the unification process.

In effect, this Shabbat meal can be characterized as the meal of unification where previous jealousies and grudges dissolved.

This is a direct lesson to us about the power of the Shabbat to unify us. Shabbat is

referred to in the Zohar as a day of unification in every sense of the word. It is the day, the Zohar says, in which “all realms of anger and severe forces flee from her and vanish.” The spiritual aura of the Shabbat is so powerful that on Shabbat, and specifically during the Shabbat meals, all of the external factors that divide us fall to the wayside and, in their place, our inherent spiritual unity deriving from the common source of our souls is on display.

## THE ETERNAL SHABBAT

The Shabbat meal that we enjoy today is also a metaphor for the ultimate Shabbat of existence, the Messianic Age, when the unity will become permanent. There will be a total rapprochement between all of the different factions of the Jewish community. Indeed, there will also be peace between Israel and all of the nations of the world who, in the words of the Prophet, will serve G-d with “one consent.” The catalyst for this is the preparations we are making now for the future Shabbat. This is alluded to in the words “and to prepare.” It does not say what they were to prepare for because in this undefined silence it is subtly alluding to the ultimate preparatory phase of history which is now.

## WHY DID THEY DRINK?

We can now answer the question commentators ask about the Torah's description of that meal. "They drank and became drunk with him." Rashi comments that from the day they sold Joseph neither Joseph nor his brothers drank any wine. This was the first time they had done so since then. Commentators ask: why did the brothers, who did not realize that they were sitting at the table with Joseph, drink wine?

In light of the foregoing characterization of that meal as a Shabbat meal we can understand that it was the very aura of Shabbat that inspired them to elicit their deepest feelings of love and unity. Wine, our Sages tell us, reveals our secrets. Their physical drinking of wine was an expression of their spiritual feelings that were finally becoming aroused. These newly exposed feelings engendered a profound and unprecedented sense of unity among the brothers. Their spiritual drinking of the wine made them feel at peace with themselves and with each other to the point that they now felt comfortable enough to again drink wine.

## PREPARING FOR THE SHABBAT: TWO SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT

The Talmud records a dispute between the Sages Shammai and Hillel with regard to the preparations for the Shabbat. Shammai would purchase food on Sunday and select the finest for Shabbat. On Monday he would find something of higher quality and designate that for Shabbat and eat what he had prepared on Sunday. He would repeat this every day, so that

whatever he ate during the week was, in effect, a result of his preparation for the Shabbat. In the words of the Talmud, "All his life he ate for the honor of Shabbat."

Hillel, by contrast, would do everything for the sake of Heaven. He would say, "Blessed is G-d day by day." He would trust that he would find the best food right before Shabbat.

The two Sages' approach to Shabbat reflects two ways of understanding our role in preparing for both the weekly Shabbat and for the ultimate Shabbat, the Era of Redemption.

Shammai's approach is to focus on the goal all the time. Whatever we do any day of the week has to be connected to Shabbat. Shammai is obsessed with the spiritually intoxicating day of Shabbat that is a taste of the future. Hillel, by contrast, lives one day at a time. While Hillel also thought of the Shabbat everyday of the week his focus was on living each day to the fullest. When people are so preoccupied with preparing for a future event they can forget about the daily obligations they have as Jews. And it is precisely when we make the most of each day of the week that we are best prepared for the ultimate Shabbat.

Both approaches are correct.

On the one hand, we must constantly be thinking of the goal, of preparing ourselves for the future Redemption. Particularly now as we get closer to that time everything we do must be permeated with the sense that now is precisely the time for the preparation of Shabbat.

On the other hand, we must not let our yearning for the future impede our ability to do our job while we are still here in the last moments of exile. Every day must

be filled with the study of Torah and fulfillment of the Mitzvos. While we are here in exile our mission is to make wherever we are an extension of the Holy Land of Israel and every moment a Shabbat moment. This we do even as we prepare for the imminent arrival of Moshiach who will transport us into a new era, a Shabbat Era, and bring us back to the Land of Israel in both the literal and spiritual sense.

## CHANUKAH IN EGYPT?

It is interesting, as many commentators have pointed out, that the words which contain Joseph's order to his supervisors to "slaughter an animal and prepare" contain the letters that, when rearranged, spell "Chanukah!"

What connection is there between the preparations for the Shabbat feast and Chanukah?

A connection can be found in light of the above analysis of the two approaches of Shammai and Hillel and what can be understood as a parallel dispute between Shammai's and Hillel's students.

Concerning the Chanukah lights there is a dispute between the School of Shammai and School of Hillel. The School of Shammai maintains that we should light eight lights the first night, seven the second night, and so on, in declining order. The School of Hillel maintains that we start with one light the first night and continue in ascending order.

It may be suggested that the School of Shammai, following the teaching of their mentor Shammai, were obsessed with Shabbat preparations. The School of Shammai therefore put their emphasis on the first

day of Chanukah. On the first day of Chanukah they saw into the future that there would be an eight-day miracle; so they were obsessed with those eight days. On the second night they saw seven days of miracles so they "lived" with those seven days, and so on.

The School of Hillel, as did their mentor Hillel, directed their energies to living each day to its fullest, knowing that such an outlook will ultimately lead to the future. The School of Hillel therefore required the lighting of one light the first night. On the first day there was one miracle, and it was that miracle that had to be celebrated and internalized.

Today, as we stand on the threshold of the future Redemption we have to incorporate both approaches.

To be sure, we must follow the Halacha and light in accordance with the School of Hillel until the time of Redemption when, according to the teachings of the

**“Today, as we stand on the threshold of the future Redemption, we have to incorporate both approaches.**

Ari, we will follow the School of Shammai. But, nonetheless, emotionally and spiritually we must integrate these two approaches.

On the one hand, we must yearn for the future when G-d's light, the infinite G-dly light created on the first day of creation that enables us to see from one end of the world to the other, will be revealed. This primordial light is recaptured with the Chanukah lights that we light at present, but which will be fully revealed in the future at which time we will have all eight lights burning brightly, the number eight representing the most transcendent light. Our prayers have to be directed to G-d to make this time become a reality. All of our thoughts have

to revolve around Moshiach and Redemption.

We must also, simultaneously, follow the approach of Hillel and the School of Hillel and focus our attention of living every day that we are still in exile to the fullest, utilizing every opportunity to make our lives today as radiant as they can be. Even if it means just lighting one humble candle, it can be the one candle that will banish the darkness of exile entirely and permanently. We cannot allow our obsession with the future to deter us from action today. In this period of transition we have to combine the two opposite mindsets of obsession with the future even as we are totally involved in the present.



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# MY MOTHER: PART II

In this chapter, R' Heishke continues to tell us about his dear mother, about her attribute of truth and heart of gold. He concludes the chapter with an amusing story about a “robber” who hid in the hallway of the house.



By Rabbi Yehoshua Dubrawski a”h

## THE DISAPPOINTING MARK

In describing my mother, I don’t want to use modern, overused hyperbolic terms such as “model of truth,” or “embodiment of truth.” However, I do want to use the Chassidic term “holding by the truth” (Yid. halten baim emes), as my mother truly stood by the truth. I would like to offer just one example:

As I have already related, we children did not go to public school even though it was compulsory. The reason was quite simple. In those schools they inculcated the children with heresy and communist ideology. We didn’t attend the government school despite the terrible threats made against my father by the “four letters” (NKVD).

Since we needed to know the language of the country, some grammar and some mathematics, my mother taught us these subjects at home. At a later point, my mother taught these subjects to a 12-year-old nephew, Leibel Shapiro, who also did not attend public school.

My mother wanted to teach me too, but as usual, I was very uninterested. Later on I suspected (and found out that it was more than just a suspicion) that aside

from laziness, stubbornness laced with ego was operative here. Oy, how right my father was!

Why was this midda aroused in me at this time? My mother gave us homework to do and she checked it and gave us marks. It happened a few times that my mother gave Leibele higher marks than she gave me when I thought my work was better than his. Apparently, I was annoyed and became ungeblazen (Yid. lit. swollen, i.e. exceedingly upset), and my mother realized why I was dissatisfied. She once asked me whether I would be happy if she fraudulently gave Leibele a lower mark. In any case, she promised that she loved me regardless, even with a lower mark.

If so, all should have been well and fine, but in any case, I learned very little in the way of secular studies with my mother.

## THE SHAPIRO FAMILY

Apparently, as they say, hashgacha designated to my mother the role of helping others, even in her childhood. I must first make you acquainted with Uncle Nachum Shapiro who was an interesting parsha unto himself. He was my grandfather’s brother. His father, R’ Leib Shapiro had

(I think) ten children, and the Shapiro family was outstanding in that all the sons and daughters were very religious. This was a rare phenomenon in those days when there was a precipitous decline in religious observance. As I heard from a reliable source, the Shapiro family was blessed by the Rebbe Rashab.

R’ Leib was not one of those oisgeveikte (Yid. lit. soaked through, i.e. a product of generations of) Lubavitcher Chassidim, but he clung to Chabad with all his heart and soul. Most of his children were full-fledged Lubavitchers. Uncle Nachum was not an official full-fledged Lubavitcher Chassid, but he was a fundamental and complete Yerei Shamayim, with the natural warm and heartfelt emotionalism and characteristics of a genuine Chassid. I loved to listen to his davening, which was with great fervor and movement despite the fact that he was a corpulent man of large stature. He was often involved in sharp debates with the old-time maskilim in Krolevets. He was always in a good mood, smiley, a bit of a prankster, cheerful and happy, especially with children.

His wife, Aunt Raizel, was smart with a sharp mind. That is what Zeide-Rav said about her. She was sick for years with the “workers” illness (which is how

they referred to TB). She became sick when all her children were small and some of them needed to be fed and bathed and dressed and taken to the facilities, etc. The washrooms in those days were outdoors and using them wasn't particularly easy in the winter (surely not cleaning up the children afterward when a piece of newspaper was a treasure). Uncle Nachum supported himself, barely, by work which necessitated his being away from home, and the poverty in the home was terrible. It was a harsh and chronic poverty that was unusual even for those days and places that were full of poverty. And this was despite the help of relatives to the best of their ability.

There were times that Aunt Raizel could not get out of bed and yet, the children had to be cared for. There was barely a coin in the house with which to minimize their hunger; money to hire someone to help her was nothing but a fantasy. Someone had to help without being paid. This fell to my mother's lot. She was a very young girl at the time. I did not hear whether this was something the family decided or mother herself volunteered. I am convinced that she volunteered. I doubt whether Uncle Nachum's five children ever realized, even later in their lives, how hard this was for my mother.

What I managed to discern from my mother's recounting of those days is that aside from the physical hardship which she accepted, more or less, with love – i.e. watching the children, feeding them, cleaning them, bathing them, etc. – she would stifle her anguish over having to eat in Uncle Nachum's house occasionally, and sleep there, when she had better food and a warmer blanket at home. Yet, she

hid this from her parents.

## ENDLESS DEVOTION AND COURAGE

That was my mother's lot when she was very young, but that wasn't all. Even after she married, she extended herself to help others under dreadful conditions and for long periods of time. Zeide-Rav and Bubbe Eidele lived with us. When my grandmother passed away, I was still a little boy. I barely remember a few images of her from those years, how before Pesach she kashered the big pot and other utensils; how on Tisha B'Av she



**He stood there with his face to the wall and murmured something. I did not hear the words that he said, but with his fist banging on his chest I realized he was saying Vidui.**

cried a lot as she recited Kinos while sitting on an overturned pot. I also remember the days and nights filled with pain and suffering and fear before her soul departed in purity on Yom Kippur.

I don't want to dwell on the terrible suffering Bubbe endured before she died. I want to briefly tell that which is connected with my mother's help and mercy for long weeks and months. Bubbe suffered from a terrible and incurable illness that had to do with jaundice and itching all over her body. She literally tore the skin off herself and did not stop crying and groaning. She could not restrain herself and she would say, "Why do my husband and children have to suffer so much because of me..."

Indeed, they suffered greatly. Her illness was very contagious, and it was very difficult to stay clear of the objects she came

in contact with. Her cries and groans could be heard day and night and nobody could sleep. My dear mother, though, suffered quietly more than everybody else put together and swallowed her tears. She had to help Bubbe and be close to the sickbed, washing her, changing her sheets and undergarments while ignoring the danger (Bubbe's daughter, Aunt Tzivia, would come occasionally but could not stay; my mother never got a respite from helping Bubbe).

A few years went by and my maternal grandfather, Zeide Mendel, passed away. As mentioned in an earlier

installment, he suffered only a brief illness, but my mother's pain endured for a long time, until...a few years later she had to help her sick mother, Bubbe Karasik.

## A FRIGHT IN THE NIGHT

One summer night, my mother, my sisters and I were guests at Zeide and Bubbe's house. Zeide Mendel Karasik was no longer alive. My great-grandfather, Chaim Bentzion sat in bed and quietly reviewed Mishnayos. As always, we enjoyed ourselves with Zeide and Bubbe. For the most part, we enthusiastically played indoor games like Lotto, Dominoes, and play swords and so on. My grandmother never took part in these games. She was very busy with her grandmotherly activities in which she was so adept. Bubbe's daughter, Aunt Sarah

**“He didn’t think about it much; he just took his gun and went to the yard near the foyer. He lifted his gun and shot a warning into the air. Then he shot again, but nothing happened. Nobody came out of the foyer.”**

(who was still a young girl) was there, along with Berel Shapiro (Bubbe’s grandson) and usually other relatives.

We were involved in our games when we heard a knock from the direction of the small foyer, between the door that led to the street and the door to the kitchen. We all jumped up in alarm. Where was the knocking coming from? Was it a knock at the door?

Some of the brave women who were sitting at the table got up and decided to enter the foyer and peek out the window to see whether anyone was there. However, when they approached the inner door of the foyer and tried to open it, they discovered the magnitude of the disaster. The door hardly opened a crack. In the meantime, we had all slowly gathered near the door and froze in fear. Since the door could not be opened, we were forced to conclude that someone was holding it closed, as there was no alternative explanation.

If so, it was someone frightening like a thief, robber or crazy bandit. What should we do? In our fright we did not think logically. If it was a thief, why would he be there in the foyer firmly holding on to the door? In the commotion that ensued, someone wanted to open the window and scream, “Help!” but others stopped this (I don’t remember who it was). Fleeing was also not a possibility because there was no other door.

Amidst the tumult, as I was gripped by a dibbuk of fear, I

went over to the bed where Zeide Chaim Bentzion lay. I never understood why I did this; maybe because Zeide was also a very fearful person. When he saw the to-do and the scared faces, he got out of bed and asked, “What’s going on?”

### THE SHPIGENOTEN ARRIVE

They told him that robbers or who-knows-who wanted to attack our house. Zeide asked again, “Where are the shpigenoten?” (Precisely what he meant by this word, I don’t know; what I know is that they were the biggest enemies of all [see first installment issue #803 – Ed.]). With chattering teeth I muttered that they were in the foyer. Zeide’s eyes opened strangely wide and he said, “Ah, in the foyer. So we need to wait.”

He stood there with his face to the wall and murmured something. I did not hear the words that he said, but with his fist banging on his chest I realized he was saying Vidui.

I stood in terror next to Zeide until I heard the sound of a gun or revolver from somewhere in the vicinity of the house. Who? What? As I heard afterward, the story went as follows. I had not noticed that Bubbe and Aunt Sarah had run to the apartment of the Christian landlady who lived in the apartment on the other side of the wall and told her the frightening goings-on.

The landlady paled and exclaimed that she knew what to do. She went to a neighbor and

told him about the frightening situation. The neighbor was the husband of the doctor of the city of Kondrat’yevka. He held one of the prominent positions in the city (in the police or some other important job) and he had a gun. He didn’t think about it much; he just took his gun and went to the yard near the foyer. He lifted his gun and shot a warning into the air. Then he shot again, but nothing happened. Nobody came out of the foyer.

The neighbor had a battery-powered lantern, and standing near the window from the outside he shone it into the foyer as we crowded around him (one can stand pretty quietly when around a man with a gun). He suddenly burst out laughing. He laughed so hard that we slowly began to laugh too without knowing why, but we were confident that it had been a false alarm.

Bubbe went closer, and once again he shone the light through the window into the foyer, and she burst out laughing. It turned out that there was a large tub leaning against the wall of the foyer. In the old European houses, probably mainly in Russia, every balabusta had a round, wooden tub in which the mother washed the little children (sometimes two or three children at once). They also did laundry in it. Bubbe hardly used it anymore, and she left it leaning against the foyer wall. It had slowly moved until it fell with a crash on the floor and that was the bang we heard. The problem was that it had fallen so that the width took up the entire area between the two doors.

They figured out a way to open the door and lifted the tub and leaned it against the wall, and sitting at Bubbe’s table, all was merry once again.

# THE BUCK STOPS HERE!

## PART III

By Rabbi Gershon Avtzon



Dear Reader sh'yichyeh:

In our previous article we shared the Rebbe's words about the importance of learning about, living with, and spreading the concepts of Geula and Moshiach. We left off with a question:

What is supposed to give us strength in these trying times?

In 5710, after the Rebbe Rayatz's histalkus, in reference to his maamarim and sichos, the Rebbe MH"M said, "Der Rebbe hut altz bavorent" (the Rebbe anticipated everything). He maintained that all answers to all questions were found in these writings, "if only Anash, and especially the T'mimim, examined the maamarim and sichos of the previous year and earlier." (Igros 4 page 24)

The mashpia R' Nissan Nemanov asked the Rebbe in the first month after the histalkus of the Rebbe Rayatz if his daughter's wedding, previously scheduled for that month, should be postponed. The Rebbe told him that there were statements in the maamarim of the Rebbe Maharash addressed to private individuals in such a way that whoever did not have a connection to those details simply did not hear them. (At one point, the Rebbe Rashab asked his father to be able to hear that which was designated for individuals.) The fact that

the subject of weddings was mentioned in the final maamer of the Rebbe Rayatz, even though it was not directly relevant to the subject under discussion, is an indication that 'hut der Rebbe em gemeint" (that the Rebbe had him in mind); he should not push off the wedding. (Igros Hey Adar 5710)

I heard the following story from Rabbi Shalom Charatonov (Mashpia in Beis Midrash Oholei Torah): "On a number of occasions I went undercover to Russia to strengthen and learn with the Jews trapped behind the Iron Curtain. At one gathering, I asked them what they want me to talk about. They answered that they wanted to hear the latest sichos of the Rebbe.

"When I asked them why it is so important to hear the latest sichos, for after all there is so much they do not know, they replied, 'Fish live the whole time in the water. Yet, when it rains, the fish come up to get the new, fresh water!'"

The Rebbe is a true "Roeh Yisroel – Shepherd of Klal Yisroel" and would never leave his flock stranded. By looking into and learning the sichos of the Rebbe – especially the ones he delivered right after the Histalkus of the Friedike Rebbe, as well as the sichos of 5751/5752 – that will give us the strength to remain steadfast in our convictions and

have a positive influence on those around us.

The following are some excerpts of the Sichos of the first year (5710) pertinent to our times:

1) "And just as in the past it was a self-evident truth for each one of us that the Rebbe would lead us to encounter our righteous Moshiach, so too should that be self-evident today.

"As to the event which took place, and so on, this is so only in our fleshly eyes; it is only a test (one of the tests comprising the birth pangs of Moshiach which must precede the coming of the righteous Redeemer), whose function is only to conceal the truth – except that an explanation is still required as to why according to the Torah there now has to be Kaddish, and so on. The purpose of this test is that people should strengthen themselves when confronted by it. In this way, the obscurity will be banished and nullified, and the truth will be manifest (as explained in the teachings of Chassidus).

"Accordingly, through strengthening our bond [with the Rebbe] by studying his Torah teachings and giving practical application to his directives (both his public directives, and also – especially – those given face-to-face to individuals at yechidus), we will immediately be granted

the merit (since we are at “the footsteps of Moshiach” of seeing the Rebbe with fleshly eyes), and the Rebbe will lead us to the Redemption.” (Truma 5710)

2) “By way of introduction, let us first understand why in relation to my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe [Rayatz], we do not say, ‘May the memory of the righteous be a blessing,’ nor do we say ‘His soul is in [the Garden of] Eden.’

“On Simchas Torah 5691 [1930], the Rebbe [Rayatz] stated, ‘Regarding my father [the Rebbe Rashab] I do not say Nishmaso Eden, because I am no writer of addresses. Besides, for me, my father has not passed away.’

“Similarly, Nishmaso Eden should not be said with reference to my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe [Rayatz], for two reasons:

“Who is the man who is able to give an ‘address,’ and to limit his whereabouts to Gan Eden, the Lower Gan Eden or the Higher Gan Eden, or infinitely higher than both?

“Why should we send him away from us? He certainly does not want to be separated from us, and he is with us!

“For the same reasons that Nishmaso Eden is not said, Zeicher tzaddik livracha is also not said, for remembering (as in the phrase ‘May the memory of the righteous be a blessing’) is appropriate only with relation to something which is remote and can therefore be forgotten. In our case, however, there is no question of forgetfulness, G-d forbid, so there is no need for calling to mind, just as there is no such need with relation to a person who is alive.” (Shlach 5710)

3) “This concept gives one the strength to go out to shuls

and to explain to the people that one meets there, that in truth Moshe did not die. Nothing has changed; it is only that it has been made possible for one to entertain the thought etc.


“If these words are well received, then all is well and good. But what if there are questions and queries?

“What happens when a little boy confronts his teacher with

following:

“The connection between the Previous Rebbe and happiness is reflected in the fact that this mode of service characterized his conduct in general. And this, despite the fact that he endured severe physical suffering and this suffering also affected his spiritual service.

“This is as his doctor once exclaimed to him in wonderment:

 **The Rebbe is a true “Roeh Yisroel – Shepherd of Klal Yisroel” and would never leave his flock stranded. By looking into and learning the sichos of the Rebbe from 5751/5752 we will get the strength to remain steadfast in our convictions and have a positive influence on those around us.**

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a question he can’t answer? The teacher flicks his cheek and says, ‘When you grow up you’ll understand...’ One should borrow this answer for a listener who poses queries: ‘This is the fact, even if you don’t understand it.’”

The following are some quotes from the Sichos of 5752:

1) “Since all the service necessary to bring the Redemption (and with it the Resurrection of the Dead) has been completed, at any moment, the Rebbe can enter and see what his Chassidim and his students are involved with. The knowledge of the imminence of this event itself should motivate a greater increase in our service and our efforts to compensate for anything that is lacking.” (VaYeira 5752)

2) On 3 Shevat – six weeks before the rebbe had a stroke which impaired his speech – the Rebbe prepared us by saying the

it is through speech that he communicated his teachings, and yet his physical afflictions were such that they prevented him from speaking properly. Seemingly, Divine Providence should have granted him a greater proficiency in this quality than possessed by others. In actuality, however, his potential was far less than what it should have been.

“We see a parallel to this concept in regard to Moshe who described himself as having a speech defect, ‘uncircumcised lips.’ Fearing that accordingly, ‘the Jewish people have not listened to me and how will Pharaoh listen to me,’ he therefore asked G-d, ‘Send by the hand of he with whom You are wont to send.’

“G-d accepted this argument and told Moshe, ‘Aharon will be your spokesman,’ i.e., Aharon was given the responsibility of communicating through speech

the concepts of Moshe. The Previous Rebbe, however, was not granted an Aharon, and thus there was a restriction placed on his communication of Chassidic teachings. This also affected the communication of teachings in writing. For when teachings are spoken with difficulty and restrictions, there are also restrictions in the manner in which they are reviewed and also in the manner in which they are prepared for printing.

“Despite these difficulties, the Previous Rebbe’s service was characterized by happiness. These concepts should be applied by all of us in preparation for Yud Shvat. Firstly, there must be an emphasis on matters of general relevance, arranging farbrengens in commemoration of the Previous Rebbe’s yahrtzait in every place, in connection with the day of the yahrtzait and on the Shabbos beforehand and on the Shabbos afterwards.

“Similarly, each person must accept a personal challenge that his study of Torah should be carried out in a manner that can, in whatever way he can, compensate for the difficulty in

communication possessed by the Previous Rebbe. This increase in study, these farbrengens, and all the service associated with Yud Shvat, should be carried out in happiness, a happiness that reflects that expressed by the Previous Rebbe in his service.”

3) On Purim Katan 5752 the Rebbe personally distributed the Maamer “V’Ata Tetzaveh.” It is the last maamer that we have – until the Hisgalus – received from the Rebbe. In the last chapter of that discourse the Rebbe writes:

“The (simple) meaning of the verse ‘And you shall command the children of Israel and they shall bring to you’ is that Moshe will command the Jewish people and thus evoke their [service], ‘And they shall bring to you.’ This is because it is Moshe who connects the Jewish people [to the Or Ein Sof] and thus generates the potential for them to carry out the service of ‘And they shall bring to you.’

“This concept can be applied in regard to the Moshe of our generation, the Previous Rebbe. His service involved arousing and revealing the faith that stems

from the essence of the soul possessed by each and every Jew in a manner that afterwards, they will be able to continue to carry out their divine service on their own initiative until they shine as ‘a constant light,’ without any change [or variation] even from the perspective of the revealed powers.”

These are a few of the quotes of the Sichos of those times. It is obviously important that one learn the Sichos on his own and internalize the messages. In our upcoming article, I will share BE”H some true stories that I have seen myself or heard first-hand from Shluchim and Anash that demonstrate how we see the Rebbe and his miracles today.

*Rabbi Avtzon is the Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivas Lubavitch Cincinnati and a well sought after speaker and lecturer. Recordings of his in-depth shiurim on Inyanei Geula u’Moshiach can be accessed at <http://ylcrecording.com>. Weekly shiurim on Moshiach topics given by Rabbi Avtzon can be viewed at [chabad.info](http://chabad.info).*

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# AMERICA SIGNALS RIGHT

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**If Netanyahu were in the opposition today, he would be speaking out against the establishment of a Palestinian state. Using his gifted oratory, he would explain to us why there's no one with whom to make peace. But Bibi is the prime minister, not the opposition leader. Therefore, instead of making such statements himself, he hears them from the leading candidate for the Republican presidential nomination, passing him on the right.**

By Sholom Ber Crombie

Translated by Michael Leib Dobry

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**N**ewt Gingrich, former Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives and leading Republican candidate for the Presidency of the United States, made some statements last week regarding his position on the current situation in the Middle East. In an exclusive television interview, Gingrich negated the legitimacy of the Palestinians as a people, rejecting “peace” treaties based upon the principle of two states for two peoples. Gingrich has passed Netanyahu on the right and has adopted the approach of the ultra-nationalist politicians.

The citizens of Eretz Yisroel rubbed their eyes in disbelief when they saw the television

interview with the frontrunner in the race for America's highest office. Political commentators tried to explain that this is merely an attempt to curry favor with the country's Jewish voters leading up to next year's presidential election. Whatever the case may be, Gingrich based his statements upon simple facts and an accepted viewpoint held by the American public. The truth of the matter is that there is no 'Palestinian people' and there's no one with whom to make peace. It is also an irrefutable fact that if the government of Israel will agree to establish a Palestinian state, it will immediately turn into “Hamastan” and become another branch of the fundamentalist

Iranian regime in the Middle East.

It stands to reason that if Netanyahu were in the opposition today, we would probably hear the same things from him. He would be speaking out against the establishment of a Palestinian state because it would pose a strategic threat to millions of Jews living in Eretz HaKodesh. Using his gifted oratory, he would explain to us why there's no one with whom to make peace. But Bibi is the prime minister, not the opposition leader. Therefore, instead of making such statements himself, he hears them from the leading candidate for the Republican presidential nomination.

Gingrich's words make quite clear what the Rebbe had always spelled out in the past. The Americans are not hostile to the Land of Israel. On the contrary, they want only the best for the Jewish People, and a strong and secure Eretz Yisroel is in the very best interests of the United States. But they feel uncomfortable when they have to take positions that are even more right wing than the Israeli government. When a Republican presidential candidate says that there is no 'Palestinian people,' they look at him in Eretz Yisroel as if he's lost his mind. Commentators have turned him into a right-wing extremist straight out of the outlawed Kach Party, declaring that he is "irrelevant" and outside the norms of political thinking.

However, Gingrich is not the only Republican candidate speaking in such tones. He has some stiff competition from the other presidential hopefuls. Today, there are several candidates running for the Republican Party's leadership, and each of them seeks to prove how they can present the strongest policies in support of Israel against the Palestinians. It would seem that those policies reviled by Israeli politicians have become the mainstream in America.

The only thing left is to hope that the Israeli policymakers won't spoil the enthusiasm of their Republican friends and have the sense to adopt a clear defense strategy. If Netanyahu will express a strong policy and declare firmly and proudly that the government of Israel has no intention of giving away any more territory, it is quite likely that after the U.S. elections, we would have a resident in the White House for the coming four years with no expectations that

the government in Yerushalayim would enter any negotiations with the PLO terrorist leaders. This reality has put the prime minister and his ability to stand firm to the test. Will he now understand that he must take a clear stance in defense of our security interests, or will the Americans entice him into believing that it would be better to cave in a little more?

### **HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE EYES OF THE EXTREME LEFT**

While Gingrich created a stir in America when he aired his clear opinion on what's happening between us and our Arab neighbors, there were those who made certain to fan the flames of discord between the Jewish settlers and their Arab neighbors over the so-called "price tag policy." There were those who deliberately turned the firestorm over these random acts of violence against Arabs and IDF security forces into the most talked about subject by the state-run media, thus further inflaming the hostile environment. The military responded in a most irresponsible manner to the "price tag" attacks, calling the perpetrators 'terrorists' and leaving them open to reprisals. They sought to create a picture of seemingly violent clashes between the settlers and the residents of Arab villages.

The reality of the leftists giving aid and comfort to the Arabs is not a new phenomenon. Left-wing activists come to an olive harvest on the grounds of Jewish settlements, accompanied by Arabs from nearby villages who unlawfully claim ownership of the land. They receive the backing of the military and the police, who merely want to maintain quiet without really checking

into the possible ramifications. The Arab olive harvesters often turned out to be PLO operatives working in cooperation with the terrorist organizations, and even committing their own acts of violence and destruction against Jewish settlers. This doesn't seem to bother the left-wing activists marching in solidarity on behalf of the 'innocent' Arabs, even when their activities cause serious harm to the security of the Jewish settlements in Yehuda and Shomron.

Last week, Orit Struk, chairman of the Yesha Human Rights Organization, announced that she would not be taking part in the human rights march held in Tel Aviv. She explained that human rights organizations in Eretz Yisroel today have been turned into a hothouse for extreme leftist activities under the guise of the merciful Jewish heart. Anarchistic left-wing activists are portrayed as human rights advocates in a cloak of holiness, enabling them to cause harm to their fellow Jews.

Many of these naïve activists continued to fan the flames among their Arab friends over the "price tag" policy or other confrontations with the settlers, encouraging them to commit acts of violence against Jews. Avi Issacharoff, military correspondent for the Haaretz daily, has already revealed that high-ranking Hamas members have said that during the intifada, the left-wing activities led to a continuation of the terrorists' murderous rampages. This was at a time when the Arab voices in support of the armed struggle drew their strength from those in Eretz Yisroel calling for a boycott of the settlements and refusing to serve in the Israel Defense Forces.

When the Rebbe spoke about

events in Eretz HaKodesh, he often mentioned those left-wing advocates, whose activities during those years were relatively insignificant. The Rebbe made passionate arguments against their actions, comparing statements by Peace Now to the slander of the spies. On more than one occasion the Rebbe cried out from the depths of his heart about Jews who tell the Arabs what claims to make against the Jewish People. The Rebbe explained that those Jews calling for the return of the liberated territories merely strengthen the terrorist organizations. This is especially the case when many people in Israeli society empathize with extreme leftist activities, looking upon them as an expression of political moderation striving to achieve true peace.

### WHO DOESN'T CARE ABOUT THE HOMELESS?

This past week, we encountered yet another insolent display from the left-wing groups, when the competition among one hundred and forty Israeli non-profit organizations, sponsored by Bank Leumi, was halted at its very peak. A prize of two million shekels would be divided between the winning organizations. Among the more prominent participants in this competition were several Chabad institutions that received impressively high rankings. Foremost among them was “Yad L’Yeled Meyuchad” for special children, sponsored by Agudas Chassidei Chabad, which reached fifth place and created a tremendous Kiddush Hashem.

To the great chagrin of the left-wing circles, the right-wing “Im Tirtzu” organization was in second place, as it received the votes of tens of thousands of Israelis. Extremist left-wing



Former House Speaker Newt Gingrich (center) explaining his firm stance regarding the Palestinians at a recent Republican candidates' debate in Iowa.

groups, led by Peace Now, initiated an aggressive campaign against Bank Leumi, demanding unequivocally that this organization be removed from the competition. They charged that “Im Tirtzu” was a political front, despite the fact that the prize money would clearly not be used for political purposes, rather for its informational activities and programs.

The campaign eventually succeeded, and the bank announced the end of the competition. The left-wing organizations breathed a sigh of relief, as the tremendous threat to their elitism had been removed. They had suddenly forgotten about those human rights associations and cultural activities that could have benefited from the proposed grant. They no longer cared about the values they preach to us, day and night. What's most important is that a right-wing organization would not receive the monetary prize.

This hypocrisy typifies left-wing methods throughout the years. They speak quite mightily about justice and honesty, but they forget all their ardent speeches when we're talking

about settlers or just ordinary religious Jews.

This is the same injustice that is inflicted upon the settlement outposts, when the merciful left wing encourages throwing young Jewish families out of their homes with small children in the middle of the night and then destroying the houses. This is the same injustice caused to the victims of the Gush Katif expulsion, still housed in shabby caravans – and no one seems to care. This is the same injustice that leads people, young and old, to prefer to take action on behalf of the enemy, instead of their own brethren. Some of them do this naively without pretentiousness, while others are downright stupid. In either case, they're not the ones who are truly responsible. They act based on what they have absorbed from the state-run machinery and liberal media in Eretz Yisroel. This has given them a natural feeling of identity with the murderers of their own people, instead of embracing our brethren in Yesha, simply because they have been tarnished with the stigma of being labeled “settlers,” “ultra-Orthodox,” or “right-wingers.”

# ARE YOU REALLY SORRY?

By M.E. Gordon

**Z**eide Chaim had just prepared himself a cup of tea, and was hoping for a quiet ten minutes, but it wasn't meant to be. His grandchildren were visiting from overseas, and he had the pleasure of watching them this afternoon,

while their parents went with Bubby on a shopping trip. Zeide had thought that the six children were settled with some board games he had taken out from the closet, but now it sounded like a major argument had broken out. With a sigh, he put his hot tea on the counter, out of reach of little hands, and went to see what was happening.

"Shimmy knocked all the pieces off the board," wailed Chavie.

"Mordy pushed me, so I messed up his game," protested Shimmy.

"But Shimmy pushed me first, so I pushed him back."

"That's because Mordy ate my cookie when I wasn't looking."

"I did not!"

"Then where is it, huh?"

"Look, the baby found a cookie," piped up Sari.

"Okay everybody," Zeide sighed, "the war is over. How about if everyone apologizes and we make some peace? Mordy? Shimmy?"

"Sorry but

Mordy pushed me."

"Sorry Shimmy, but I thought you took my cookie."

Zeide looked from one child to the other. He had been a teacher and a school principal for many years, and he knew that the peace was still shaky. His tea would have to wait.

"Kinderlach, sit down with me on the couch, and I'll tell you about the 'excuse master.'"

The children settled themselves down on the couch, and Zeide began his story.

"As you know, I was a teacher and principal for many years, and as such, I've had to deal with many students who came late or forgot their homework. I've heard every excuse you can imagine, but there was one student who stood out as the master of excuses. Let's call him Yossi, although that was not his real name."

"Yossi came late almost every day, and each time he would start off with 'I'm sorry, but...' One day it would be 'I'm sorry but I forgot to set my alarm' the next day it would be 'I'm sorry but I didn't hear my alarm.' Another time he'd tell me 'I'm sorry, but I missed the bus.' He only lived three blocks away. Sometimes he would be more imaginative, for example the time he told me that he had to wait for his socks to come out of the dryer that morning, because the baby had put them in his negel vasser cup.

"When it came to lost homework, his excuses were even more interesting. Once his



homework was left in his pocket and went through the washing machine, another time it was left on a windowsill and fell out the window. He knew every excuse that had ever been invented. The baby had scribbled on it, his mother used it to write her shopping list, he left it at his sister's house, or it was sucked into the vacuum cleaner.

"One day, I decided that enough was enough. When he walked into school half an hour after class had started, and began to say 'I'm sorry, but...' I stopped him. I said to him: 'You don't have to tell to me, I already know. You woke up on Sunday and thought on Monday that you'll come to class on Tuesday, but you thought it over on Wednesday why should you come in on Thursday if Friday is already Erev Shabbos.' Yossi looked a bit embarrassed and said 'I really am sorry, but...'

"Stop right there. If you REALLY are sorry, then don't continue. If you really are sorry you would take responsibility and not tell me any excuses.

"But I really couldn't come earlier because there was a fire engine across the street and I just had to find out what happened.'

"Why? Did the firemen need you?

"No, but...'

"Yossi, I'll make a deal with you. I won't give you any

“Another time he'd tell me 'I'm sorry, but I missed the bus.' He only lived three blocks away. Sometimes he would be more imaginative. For example, one time he told me that he had to wait for his socks to come out of the dryer that morning, because the baby had put them in his negel vasser cup.”

consequence for coming late, but I have one condition.

"Uh oh!"

"The condition is that the word 'but' never follows 'I'm sorry.'

"I sent Yossi into class, knowing that he thought he had gotten off easily. He would soon find out otherwise. The next time that Yossi came late, I was waiting for him. 'Good morning, Yossi,' I said, 'you are late.'

"I'm sorry, b..."

"Stop! Remember the deal? No but.

"Okay. I'm sorry I'm late.'

"Yossi looked unhappy. He probably had an excuse prepared, and felt uncomfortable that he couldn't use it. The next few times that he came late or forgot his homework, I reminded him not to say 'but.' Within two weeks, Yossi was coming on time every day, with his homework done.

"But why, Zeide?" asked Mordy. "What difference did that one word make?"

"To truly be sorry for your actions means that you recognize that Hashem gave you free choice and you could have chosen to do the right thing rather than the wrong. As long as you make an excuse, or fail to recognize what was wrong about your action, you cannot truly do t'shuva. Saying sorry will not change anything unless you take responsibility for your actions."

Shimmy looked thoughtful. "I'm sorry Chavie and Mordy for ruining the game. I'm sorry for pushing you, Mordy, and for suspecting you of eating my cookie."

Mordy replied: "And I'm sorry that I pushed you back."

"I sorry," repeated the baby.

Everyone laughed.

"You're not Sari," answered Sari swinging the baby up into her arms, "I'm Sari!"

The above story is fictional. The lesson is based on Likkutei Sichos vol. 30 p. 198-203.

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# MISSION (IM)POSSIBLE

Rabbi Yisroel Harpaz

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Does the world love the Jews or hate the Jews? They hate to love us, and they love to hate us. On the one hand, the entire basis of world civilization and almost anything decent that it has to offer stems from thinkers, both Jew and gentile, who borrowed (or outright stole) from Judaism. And for this we are resented. On the other hand, we are, historically, the most oppressed and persecuted people ever. And for this we are hallowed. What gives?

Jacob and his brother, Eisav, are the quintessential Jew and anti-Jew. When Jacob finally comes home after a long and bitter separation, Eisav greets him with a large army. But instead of waging war, Eisav embraces and kisses Jacob. Wholeheartedly. What gives?

Everyone knows that Jews are liars. We claim to be here for the purpose of a Divine mission of making this material world a spiritual and holy place. But, inevitably we get caught up in our material affairs and forget about this mission we're supposed to be on. So the world scoffs and says, "Yah, right. Your mission is impossible. Your so-called holy purpose is just a pretext for you to dominate the world and take over."

They have a point. And the fact that they can point at the Jew and see the hypocrisy gives rise to a special kind of resentment and anger that is reserved solely for the Jews. Because if we're not being successful in order to meet our spiritual, Divine mission,

then what are we doing here? We're just invading the turf of the materialists for our own material agenda.


When Eisav saw Jacob in his full glory, emerging from the depths of darkness in Charan and coming home a proud, spiritually enlightened individual devoted to G-d, he was overwhelmed. The material-spiritual paradox was shattered. And like watching an elephant walk through the eye of a needle, he saw the impossible and was awed.

The menorah that we light during the eight days of Chanukah is a reminder of the grand golden menorah that stands in the Temple. But there are several differences between the two menorahs. The Temple menorah is lit inside the sanctuary during the day, whereas the original custom of the Chanukah menorah was

Temple to the entire world. Therefore, when this spiritual sanctuary was destroyed by the ancient Greeks, the menorah lighting also stopped.

The Chanukah menorah, on the other hand, illuminates the darkness. Lighting the menorah commemorates the victory of the Jews in their quest for sovereignty from their oppressors — the victory of light over darkness. So we can light them wherever we happen to find ourselves on the road map of history, regardless of how dark it is.

When we find ourselves in times of trouble, when things seem bleak and dark, we ask ourselves how to combat the darkness, how to overcome tragedy, how to emerge from depression. We get caught up in the momentary darkness, we get sucked into it, and we forget that an entire dark room can

 **The material-spiritual paradox was shattered. And like watching an elephant walk through the eye of a needle, he saw the impossible and was awed.**

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to light it outside the entrance of one's house at night. Inside during the day versus outside at night — what's the difference?

The Temple menorah was lit in a place that was permeated with G-d's presence. You could literally feel the holiness there, like a bright, sunny day. The lighting of the menorah was to signify this radiant experience and its transmission via the

become full of light by turning on one small lamp, or even striking a single match. The recipe for salvation, both personal and collective, is not found in mixing with the darkness, because you can never find your way in the darkness. You just have to add a little light, and then things become clear.

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# MUSIC AND CHINUCH

By Rabbi Levi Goldstein



Reb Hillel Paritcher would often say: He who possesses a חוש (a warm sensitivity) to Negina has a better חוש in Chassidus too.<sup>1</sup>

Music is a gift from Hashem to mankind, a heavenly gift indeed!

Music is one of the greatest gifts that Hashem gave us. Music has unique powers; it has the ability to lift us up to lofty heights or to drag us down to the very depths.

We are no more than soft clay as we permit this heavenly power of music to mold us into a premeditated form.

It is clear why music plays such a prominent role in Divine Worship, as we find in the Beis HaMikdash that the Leviim harmoniously sang the beautiful songs of praise to Hashem.

In the HaYom Yom (22 Tammuz) it says: The Rebbe [Rashab] once said, **“A Chassidishe niggun strengthens one’s hope and trust, brings joy, and positions the home and the entire household in a ray of light.”**

In Chassidus it is explained

1) page 221. ספר השיחות תרצ”ו – חורף ת”ש

Conversely, there is a saying of elder Chasidim: “One who does not possess a חוש (a warm sensitivity) to Negina suffers from a serious coarseness of his nefesh.”

that when one sings or listens to music, he is thereby connecting his very soul with the thoughts and feelings of the composer of that particular music.

If the composer is a G-d-fearing person who composed the song in order to express a good and eidel midda, then that midda is automatically transferred to the listener.

Yes, if it is a chassidishe niggun, composed by a Rebbe, or an עובד (a Chasid who is davening with fervor), then a feeling of Chassidishkait and Yiras Shamayim takes over the listener and has a very positive spiritual effect upon him.

Thus, we must be responsible before listening to a piece of music. We must peek behind the scenes of its composition. One should ask himself, “Who is the composer? Is he the sort of person I would want my children to grow up like or to imitate?”

Now, bearing all the above in mind, let us see what the Rebbe wrote<sup>2</sup> to a composer, who had asked the Rebbe about Jewish music in regard to the latest style of western music (pop, rock and roll, etc.):

(The following is a free translation of the Rebbe’s answer.)

**“The theme of today’s style of music has been expertly prepared and planned by its composers to target the hearts of the listeners and influence them with the following undesirable feelings: arousal of the Yetzer; rejection of all boundaries and Seder (order) in general, and in Tznius (modesty) in particular; a conviction that everything is permissible; and the arrogance to assume that it is totally okay to experiment with whatever one desires... etc.”**

After such powerful words of the Rebbe, nothing more needs to be said or explained.

The message is obvious. Play chassidishe niggunim in the house, in the car, and all the time. Our children will then begin to appreciate them.

In conclusion, let’s get our eyes and ears prepared to see and hear the great revelations in store for us in the time of Geula.

The very future of our generation and Klal Yisroel hangs in the balance, and thus depend on our choices that we make today.

Resolve to monitor your precious gem, your gift from Hashem, your child. Be aware of what he or she is watching and listening to. In return for this, you will have a well-mannered child fortified with true love of Hashem and the Torah.

2) page 179. לקוטי שיחות חל”ה